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A PERFECT  
ACCOUNT  
OF  
The Tryals and Condemnation  
OF  
The Grand and Notorious  
Highway-men,

*Thomas Chavenor* that sometime since made an Escape out of *Newgate*, and was lately retaken, and now Convicted for Robbing certain Excise-men of Eleven hundred pounds;

*Michael Pursell*, found guilty upon Three several Indictments for Robbing of Clothiers upon the Highway of great sums of Money,

At the ASSIZES held for the County of *Essex* the 4th, 5th, and 6th of this instant *March* 1677.

With a Narrative of other remarkable Proceedings at the said Assizes.

And the number of those Condemn'd, Burnt in the Hand, and Transported.

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This may be Printed. *Ro. L'Estrange.*

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*London*: Printed for *D. M.* 1678.

A PERFECT

# ACCOUNT

OF

The Trials and Confessions

The Great Highway-men

## Highway-men.

Several persons, who sometime since made an  
escape out of Newgate and were taken again, and now  
committed for Robbing certain Highway-men, have  
been brought to the Old Bailey, and upon several  
indictments for Robbing of Citizens upon the Highway  
of great sums of Money.  
At the ASSIZES held for the County of Middlesex  
the 25th inst. of this month, the following were  
tried.

With a Narrative of other remarkable Trials  
crediting as the said Affairs.  
and in a number of most interesting and  
valuable facts.

This may be had of the Author, Mr. J. B. B. B.

London: Printed by W. D. B. B. B.



News from *Chelmsford.*

A PERFECT

A C C O U N T

O F

The Tryals and Condemnation

O F

The Grand and Notorious

Highway-men.

**T**He extraordinary Mischiefs committed of late upon most Roads of this Kingdom by Highway-men, and the Apprehension of several of them having occasion'd a general Discourse, but especially the notorious *Thomas Chavenor*, famous for

his subtilty in making his escape out of *Newgate*, and no less for his folly in lurking so long afterwards about this *Town*, till at last he was retaken. For publick satisfaction 'tis thought fit to gratifie the Reader with an Account both of his Tryal and anothers likewise condemned with him at *Chelmsford* Assizes.

In order whereunto we must acquaint you, That about the latter end of *April* last a company of Excise-men, five in all in number, but one of them unhappily behinde the rest, having a very considerable sum of money (counted by common report to be Eleven hundred pounds) conveying the same up to *London*, were off of *Hodsdon*, just upon the parting of the two Counties *Essex* and *Hartfordshire*, set upon, and after a very resolute defence overmastered, by eight Highway-men, who seiz'd their money; and for the more clever conveyance, divided the Bags amongst them, and so having bound the Excise-men, and turn'd their Horses loose with Bridles and Girts cut, rid away



away with all the speed imaginable. However, Company soon after passing that road, and in particular, he of their own party that was behinde, coming up, released the persons robb'd, got their horses, rais'd Hue and Cry, and in a moment all the Country was upon the pursuit, and so hot, that the Thieves were forc'd to separate themselves, and four for that time got clear away; the other four followed more closely were forced to fling away their ill gotten money, and two taking shelter in a Wood were there apprehended, and the other two taken in a Village: who were all four tried at *Hartford* Assizes the 20th of *July* last and condemned, but onely three of them executed.

Amongst the other four that got off was *Thomas Chavenor*, who with six more was taken on *Munday* the 13th of *November* last in the *Strand*; and after his escape and retaking, was now carried down to *Chelmsford* Assizes: where upon sufficient evidence he was proved to be one of the persons acting in that Robbery; nor indeed could he much deny.

deny it : whereupon he was found guilty by the Jury.

'Tis confess'd there was no actual Murder committed by him or his Crew in this Robbery, but it was the sad occasion of one : For the before-mentioned Excise-man that was behinde lighting a Pipe of Tobacco, being suspected wrongfully as an Accessary, or for giving notice of the Booty, took the undeserved Scandal so heinously, that he resolved not to survive the disgrace, but with a Pistol shot himself and died at *Hodsdon*. But in another Robbery about the same time, at a place call'd *Watford-gap*, there was an honest Grasier lost his life, and 'tis credibly said, by the hand of this *Thomas Chavenor* : who as he was certainly a man stout and courageous, so he was observed to be more cruel than most of his wicked Companions ; who are often very tender of shedding mens Blood, though they make no conscience of taking their Money.

When he grew up, he was put forth  
to

to be a Clerk to an Attorney; but he soon left first his Business and then his Master, and came over for *England*, and was some little time at one of the Universities in quality of a Servant. After that he came to *London*, fell into Ill Company, lived extravagantly, and to maintain his Luxury made use of the Road; having for some time been esteemed a principal man amongst the Banditti of the Town.

Another persoe that was taken with him at first in the *Strand*, was likewise now carried to *Chelmeford* and tried there. His name was *Michael Pursell*; who had been with the same Gang in several Robberies: There were now no less than three several Indictments now prosecuted against him there, and he was found guilty upon them all for robbing of several Clothiers upon the *Highway*.

As their Carriage has all along been very impudent and careless, so they seem'd very little to regard their approaching Death; but

but received their Condemnation as unconcernedly as if it had been a story nothing relating to them : So far can ill habits stifle Conscience, and the custom of sinning take away the sence of sin.

Besides these, there were three others, less notorious, who there received Sentence ; one for stealing a Mare, which was taken with him, and the Felony plainly proved ; the other two for several Burglaries, (or breaking into peoples Dwelling-houses in the night to rob and pillage them :) A Crime which our Law has most prudently made Capital, since otherwise no man, after his honest Labour, could lay him down to rest in safety : Whereas now every persons house is his Castle wherein he may remain sleeping or waking in security, or punish with Death those that shall feloniously attempt to molest him.

So that upon the whole matter, there were at this Assizes at Chelmsford, Five Condemned to die, Four Burnt in the hand, and Five ordered for Transportation.

A T T E N T I O N



